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# Panel Physicians Offer Conflicting Opinions On Tobacco And Lung Cancer

## 2 Physicians Agree No Clear-Cut Proof Smoking Is Harmful

By LESLIE GRUBER  
Farm Editor

Statements ranging in meaning from "there is a definite correlation between cigarette smoking and lung cancer" to "there is no clear-cut evidence that smoking causes lung cancer" sparked a panel discussion on that subject here Friday.

The panel, composed of Dr. Alton Ochsner of New Orleans, Dr. Douglas Sprunt of Memphis, Tenn., Dr. William Rienhoff, Baltimore, Dr. Cuyler Hammond, American Cancer Society, and moderator, Dr. George Lumb, Wilmington, appeared at the first meeting of the 14th annual medical symposium of the New Hanover County Medical Society.

**Assets Proof Lacking**  
Dr. Sprunt and Dr. Rienhoff took the moderate view-point that while smoking probably never did anyone any good—clear-cut proof that it causes lung cancer is lacking.

Dr. Hammond and Dr. Ochsner took the stand that smoking definitely aids and abets lung cancer.

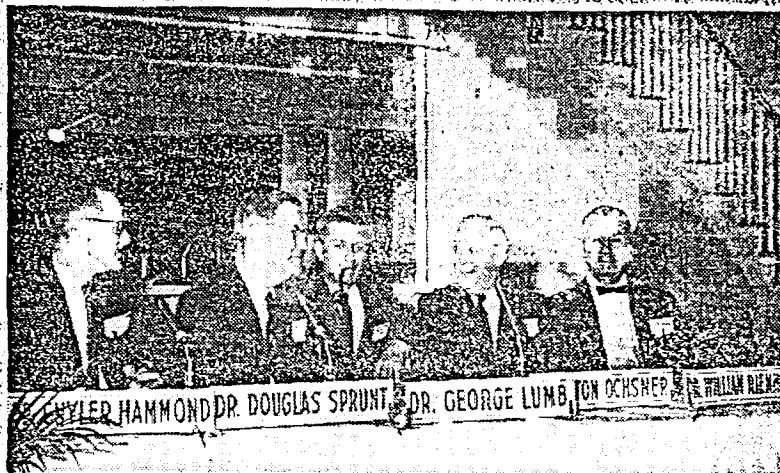
The discussion brought out questions of research methods and progress and more than anything, emphasized the wide divergence of opinion in scientific circles on the relationship of smoking to lung cancer.

Dr. Ochsner is chief of surgery of the Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, and a noted specialist in lung cancer. He said he had treated more than 1,600 patients with this disease.

**Native Of Wilmington**

Dr. Sprunt is a native of Wilmington. He is president-elect of the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists and is chief of the department of pathology at the University of Tennessee.

Dr. Rienhoff did much of the pioneer work on lung surgery in the U. S., and with another surgeon, performed the first successful



**CANCER-TOBACCO DISCUSSION**—Five doctors lead a panel discussion on the relationship between tobacco and lung cancer. They are, left to right: Dr. Cuyler Hammond of the American Cancer Society; Dr. Douglas Sprunt, professor of pathology at the University of Tennessee;

Dr. George Lumb of James Walker Memorial Hospital; Dr. Alton Ochsner, chief surgery of the Ochsner Clinic at New Orleans, La. and Dr. William Rienhoff, professor of surgery at Johns Hopkins Medical School at Baltimore, Md. (SECO Photo)

Dr. Hammond is director of the statistical research section of the American Cancer Society.

Dr. Lumb is chief of pathology at James Walker Memorial Hospital in Wilmington.

Dr. Lumb traced the broad history of tobacco from its discovery in America by the Spaniards to the present.

**Many Accusations**  
Through the years tobacco has been accused of causing numerous complaints, of curing numerous complaints and it has even been "accused of causing pleasure," the moderator added.

Dr. Lumb closed his introduction with: "And while we listen to the experts discoursing on tobacco I propose to light my pipe and listen pleasantly through a cloud of aromatic smoke."

Dr. Rienhoff declared: "We should get down to the work of finding out what there is in the

air that causes cancer. We should question: Is tobacco a harmful stimulant in regard to cancer?"

Now, people who have had irritating lung troubles such as pneumonia seem more prone to cancer than others.

**Not Too Impressed**  
As to the experimental results in studies of tobacco and cancer he said, "I haven't been too impressed. As far as I know they haven't produced cancer of the lungs by simple inhalation experiments. It seems like the connection of tobacco to cancer is statistical only."

"I feel like the genetic background of an individual has as much if not more to do with the development of lung cancer than any environmental factor."

**Moderate On Subject**  
With 80 per cent of the men and 50 per cent of the women smoking and the incidence of the disease slight there must be some strongly individual reactions if smoking causes cancer at all, he added.

Dr. Sprunt, also a moderate on the subject, said cancer is a composite disease made up of many factors. There is a fundamental law of nature that "anything must have stimuli to survive."

Health efforts are aimed toward removing the harmful stimuli. The

Dr. Hammond brought batteries of statistics to bear to support his contention that there is a direct connection between tobacco smoking and lung cancer.

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